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Goldwater: Tough Talk on the Pentagon

Pentagon boosters who see Barry Goldwater as a pushover for the military may be in for a rude surprise if the Republicans retain control of the Senate: Goldwater will become chairman of the powerful Senate Armed Services Committee, replacing John Tower of Texas who is retiring. Goldwater, who last week revealed the downing of a CIA plane in Central America, will focus his fire on Pentagon mismanagement and what he calls the "out of sight" cost increases for weapons and equipment. Unlike Tower, a shrewd, backstage operator, Goldwater can be counted on to take the entire country into his confidence if he believes his message is not getting through. In recent years, to the consternation of many in his own party, Goldwater has been an outspoken critic of public figures ranging from Richard Nixon ("If he wants to do this country a favor, he might stay [in China]") to CIA Director William Casey. Goldwater called for Casey's resignation and complained that the CIA chief "pissed" him off earlier this year by fudging the CIA's involvement in the mining of Nicaraguan harbors.

PETER McGRATH with bureau reports